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HISTORICISING MAORITANGA COLONIAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE REIFICATION OF MAORI TRADITIONS¹

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In contemporary New Zealand discourse the concept of “Maoritanga” refers to all traditional customs regarded as characteristic of the country’s indigenous Maori population. In a more specific context Maoritanga is usually defined with an emphasis on the expressive aspects of traditional Maori culture, such as the ceremonies around which social gatherings (*hui*) are organised; the expression of kinship solidarity at funeral wakes (*tangihanga*), religious services and other assemblies; arts and crafts; and songs and dances. The concept is formed by adding the noun derivative suffix *-tanga* to the noun *Māori*. It may therefore be translated as ‘Maoriness’, but Maori people themselves invariably use the Maori term, even in their predominantly English speech as many no longer master the Maori language.

Indeed, a central element in the concept of Maoritanga is a sense of pride in being Maori, or in what presently is often described as *taha Māori* or ‘Maori side’.² Maori people frequently talk about their Maoritanga or their Maori side as something of which they are proud. An attitude of pride in traditional Maori customs is often linked with a global identification with Maori people in general as well as with their distinctive way of life.

Alternatively, Maori people who deliberately avoid identifying themselves with fellow Maori are said to have “lost” their Maoritanga, which implies that they customarily disregard the tradition-oriented aspects of their ethnic identity as Maori within New Zealand society at large. Interestingly, however, “lost” in this context does not mean “untraceable”, but it bears the connotation of “suppressed subconsciously”. It is clearly assumed that if somebody has “lost” her or his Maoritanga, it can either be left untouched or be re-discovered. By the same token, Maoritanga may for strategic reasons be used at some occasions and kept hidden at others.

Thus, the concept of Maoritanga is based on an objectified and essentialised conception of Maori traditional customs. The understanding that Maoritanga can be lost and recovered, be treasured and manipulated, involves a reification of Maori traditional culture as a primordial feature of Maori people. The primordial character of Maoritanga becomes particularly apparent when people who were brought up in a chiefly European environment begin

aspiring, if not contriving, to uncover their Maoritanga at a later age. The concept of Maoritanga is seen as an immutable characteristic born into all Maori people. Maoritanga is viewed as unchangeable, as continuous, as timeless.

Paradoxically, however, this view of a “traditional” Maori way of life is only of relatively recent origin. It was initially constructed during the days of the Young Maori Party, a students’ association of a Maori Anglican Boys’ College, at the beginning of this century, nearly 150 years after the British discoverer James Cook had established the first contacts between Europeans and New Zealand “natives”. In addition, it must be noted that the Maori students, later to become influential opinion leaders, doctors, parliamentarians and scholars of Maori traditions, had been thoroughly influenced by late nineteenth century, European representations of the Maori as “dying savages” (Howe 1977b:142).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the size of the Maori population approached an absolute low through loss of land following the New Zealand Wars in the 1860s and widespread epidemics. It was commonly believed that the Maori as a people were doomed to extinction in the near future. The general despondency marking this period generated a special interest in Maori traditions in order to salvage what were considered the final remainders of traditional Maori culture in authentic form. European art collectors began passionately gathering Maori artefacts and other rarities, art patrons commenced subsidising Maori carvers to restore and decorate ancestral meeting-houses in “traditional” style, while ethnographers *avant la lettre* began recording Maori myths and legends (van Meijl 1993). If the Maori people were dying out, so they believed, Maori culture and traditions must soon die out as well.

The effort by European traditionalists to preserve Maori culture and traditions had a direct impact on Maori conceptions of their own history. Members of the Young Maori Party continued the genre of cultural documentation along the same track as the European sponsors of nineteenth century Maori traditions. By doing so, they also adopted the static view of traditions on which the entire enterprise of culture collection was based. It was assumed that in pre-European times traditional Maori culture had remained largely unchanged since the time of discovery and settlement of “Aotearoa”, or the land of the “long white cloud” as the Maori had named the North Island of New Zealand when they first set foot on its shores between 1000 and 1500 years ago.

This view on change, or rather the absence of it, in pre-European history of Maori society was complemented by a linear and unidimensional interpretation of change in (post-)colonial history. Maori and European society were

considered mutually exclusive, and change was perceived as the systematic replacement of all aspects of Maori society by those of European settler society. Consequently, change in Maori society was claimed to have commenced only with the advent of European missionaries and other settlers in the early nineteenth century. Maori society was believed to have fallen into decay as a direct result of colonial settlement, which in the second half of the nineteenth century was increasingly substantiated with Darwin's evolution theory: the vanishing of the Maori was considered an inevitable result of natural selection following interaction with European immigrants (Howe 1977b:140; 142). The evolution theory also supported the then current explanation of why it was feared that Maori traditions would be lost: in view of the advance of European civilisation it was postulated that Maori culture and traditions could not be retained in a changed form.

Although one society was expected to replace the other, emic views of culture and tradition were not simply replaced by etic models,³ in spite of the far-reaching influences the latter had on indigenous images of the past. In the discourse of the Young Maori Party, for example, etic conceptions of tradition as static were merged with indigenous conceptualisations of history in a timeless mode. Around the turn of the century, however, the construction of tradition and history as timeless no longer served Maori mytho-practical objectives in the first place, as it had done in former times.⁴ Instead, tradition and history were increasingly represented as timeless in order to defy discontinuities in the Maori way of life. The detemporalisation of Maori traditions in the documentation of "culture" by the members of the Young Maori Party aimed primarily at de-emphasising and defying the rapidly progressing westernisation of Maori society. Maori tradition was reified and substantivised as a timeless treasure in order to counter the increasing influences of European domination (van Meijl 1990:216).

Against this background the construction of the concept of Maoritanga may be clarified as well. In the light of the progressive control of Maori society by European colonisers, the members of the Young Maori Party attempted to balance the intensifying displacement of Maori culture. In order to offset the negative impact of European society on Maori culture and identity, they reconstituted and revalorised Maori cultural concepts upon which traditional forms of identity had been based. As a corollary, being Maori became very much a conscious precept in their vision: the more integrated Maori people became, the more they also became aware of what it involved to be Maori in a European dominated society. As a result, a glorifying attitude was adopted in respect of a positive ethnic identity as Maori in European society. The Young Maori Party advocated a sense of pride in being Maori and a stylised proto-culture was con-

structed in reified form to support that view. Based on an innovative construction of pan-tribal traditions and a detribalisation of Maori culture, or rather cultures, in the past, the term Maoritanga was coined to express the creation of one Maori identity in the modern, European world.

In this context it is also relevant to point out that not only the concept of Maoritanga emerged in (post-)colonial circumstances, but the social classification on which it is based as well. Before the arrival of European settlers Maori people had no name for themselves as a group, only a multiplicity of tribal names (Metge 1976:31). Colonial interaction, however, brought about the abstraction “The Maori” at the pan-tribal level of the tribal societies of New Zealand’s indigenous population. The earliest recording of the word *māori* dates from approximately 1800, thirty years after Cook’s first visit, when it was still used as an adjective of *tāngata*, meaning ‘usual’, ‘ordinary’ or ‘normal’ ‘people’. It was contrasted with *tāngata tupua*, ‘strange’ or ‘foreign people’, but, according to Sorrenson (1979:59), with supernatural connotations. Only from the 1830s has the word Maori been used as a noun. From then on Europeans were referred to as Pakeha, which is derived from the adjective *pākehā*, meaning ‘foreign’ (Williams 1971:252).

Obviously, the ideological connotations of the concept of Maori changed considerably in the years between the moment of its coining in the early nineteenth century, when Europeans had no control of Maori society and had only just begun a long-term process of colonisation, and the moment when the concept of Maoritanga was coined to counter the threat of European dominance being transformed into a form of hegemony. If there is a grain of truth in the widespread belief that European settlers adopted the adjective *māori* as a noun for the indigenous peoples of New Zealand in order to unite and rule them (e.g. Rangihau 1977:174-5), one can also argue that the construction of Maoritanga on the basis of late nineteenth century, European representations of Maori traditions and history constitutes the ultimate crowning of colonisation.

In this article I shall explore how the process of the ideological appropriation of “The Maori” took place by examining changing perceptions of Maori people in European ethnographic records from the beginning of colonisation until the beginning of this century, when the concept of Maoritanga was innovated. The periodisation of Maori ethnography and an analysis of its historical development in the nineteenth century may clarify how the mode of ethnographic representation of Maori people is linked up with the stage of colonisation. In addition, it will further elaborate the historical background to the emergence of the concept of Maoritanga and particularly the manner in which modern Maori perceptions of their own traditions and history have been coloured by European influences. I begin with a discussion of the first

ethnographic descriptions of the indigenous people of New Zealand by explorers and travellers before 1810.

FIRST ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS

In 1642 the Dutch discoverer Abel Tasman was probably the first European to visit New Zealand, but for the ethnographic record on the country's indigenous population the historic event has been insignificant. Tasman failed to establish contact with the New Zealand Maori because of a skirmish after which he quickly decided to take to his heels (Tasman 1919 [1642]:43). Evidently no contacts were established with the Maori, then, until the British explorer James Cook set foot ashore in New Zealand in 1769. Cook was not only the first European to meet the Maori, but he also conducted the first ethnographic enquiries in New Zealand. Cook and his scientific staff had been specifically instructed to make systematic detached observations of the peoples they were expected to meet on their voyage. Accordingly, Cook left behind detailed descriptions of coastal settlements. Although Cook's descriptions may by no means be considered as representative of the Maori population as a whole, his general synopsis of Maori society based on observations made in a limited number of places does seem consistent with other contemporary descriptions of Maori settlements by early voyagers (cf. Cook 1955 [1796]:273-94).

Cook's contacts with the New Zealand natives were characterised by barter. The Maori showed a special interest in iron tools, blankets, soap and fish hooks, while they, in turn, provided food and craft goods to Cook and his crew. Cook also introduced several plants and animals, of which pigs and potatoes, as well as turnips, cabbages and fowls survived and were multiplied. The introduction of these goods revolutionised the Maori subsistence economy, which in due course would have a great impact on the development of colonial contacts.

French explorers followed in Cook's footsteps, but the impact of the visits by Jean de Surville in 1769, and Marion du Fresne in 1772, was highly localised in New Zealand. Du Fresne, however, was killed by a group of Maori people after he had violated a rule of *tapu*. This incident, and the French retaliation against it, was recorded in great detail by the lieutenant of du Fresne's ship, Crozet (1891 [1771-2]), whose account had a profound impact on the representation of the alleged Maori propensity for war in Europe (van Meijl 1994). Among other things, it caused the British to opt for Port Jackson (Sydney) in New South Wales (Australia) to establish a penal settlement for the victims of the Industrial Revolution. After this eventuated in 1788 more Europeans set course for New Zealand on a regular basis.

The first to visit New Zealand regularly after the early explorers were deep-sea whalers and sealers from the colony of New South Wales. Initially their enterprises were not a great success and many had to supplement their activities by means of trade, which was particularly developed around the Bay of Islands. Not surprisingly, contemporary Maori life was not recorded in any detail in the logs of the vessels of the early traders visiting New Zealand. Although the captains and their crew were in a unique position to describe the New Zealand Maori at the initial stage of contact, they showed little interest in taking ethnographic notes. This indifference to ethnography is most likely linked up with the contemporary view regarding New Zealand as a Polynesian outlier of the new antipodean centre at Port Jackson. New Zealand was not yet considered a potential place for settlement, even though the foreigners were uniformly received with great hospitality. This, in turn, contributed to the rather complimentary few reports that were written on the Maori (McNab 1914). One of the main reasons why the New Zealand Maori were reported to be friendly involved their interest in trading with the European visitors, who were entirely dependent on Maori food supplies. The Maori provided all visitors with food which had been produced locally, and they were keen to barter their agricultural produce for the new European goods.

Indeed, the introduction of pigs and potatoes had induced a radical transformation of Maori agriculture, as a result of which a substantial surplus was produced that could be bartered with European settlers. Potatoes, in particular, were looked upon as a great boon from the outset (Savage 1939 [1807]:60-3), since they made a fully sedentary way of life possible for the first time (Groube 1964:113). Many Maori settlements were established along river-fronts and in fertile valleys, where potatoes could be produced from the land and where the indigenous people of New Zealand could trade with the first European settlers.

A corollary of the changes in settlement as a result of trade and commercial agriculture was a tightening of Maori socio-political organisation. While prehistoric settlement was based in scattered homesteads, after contact settlement became concentrated in villages since more people were needed to work the land. This, along with the increasing numbers of European settlers, caused the bonds within (sub-)tribal groupings to be strengthened. Thus, the colonial encounter drew together and reinforced at least the higher levels of the tribal organisation as it was recorded in the latter half of the nineteenth century (cf. Cleave 1983:60-2).⁵

In view of the changes in settlement and their impact on the evolution of Maori social and political organisation, it can only be regretted that the ethnographic coverage of New Zealand during the first decade of the nineteenth century is rather piecemeal. There is a time gap in the ethno-

graphic record of New Zealand between the end of initial explorations by Cook and others in 1777 and the arrival of the missionaries in 1814. Between these years there are only a handful of manuscripts and by the time they become voluminous again after the establishment of the first missionary station, whalers and sealers had speeded up a long-term process of social and cultural change for over twelve years or even longer, in areas such as the Bay of Islands. Thus, there is a distinct difference between the Maori people described by the first missionary Samuel Marsden and those described by Crozet 44 years earlier.

That this poorly documented period in New Zealand history was characterised by radical changes in Maori society is best illustrated by the emergence of the pan-tribal classification “Maori” in the beginning of the nineteenth century (see above). Since the coining of the concept of Maori coincides with the arrival of the first European settlers in New Zealand, it might be considered symbolic for the beginning of the colonisation of New Zealand. Needless to say, it also entailed a substantial increase in the production of ethnographic records.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE MISSIONARIES

In the early nineteenth century it was widely held that the Maori people were different from other “savages”. The Maori people were not considered “noble savages”, a phrase that was used more often in reference to the Tahitians, because the skirmish with Tasman and especially the incident with du Fresne had qualified European admiration of the Maori as intelligent yet fierce, cannibalistic “natives”. After the initial period of contact, however, the Maori were more and more regarded a moderately civilised race. Europeans were particularly impressed with Maori achievements in agriculture and art. In addition, there appeared a marked distinction between the Maori and other Pacific natives, such as the Aborigines in Australia, to whom Europeans scarcely related.⁶ The uniqueness of the Maori implied that they were assumed to be capable of “graduating to civilisation” (Sorrenson 1975:97).

Changing perceptions of the Maori, from belligerent savages to smart barbarians, also motivated the establishment of the first missionary station at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands in 1814. Samuel Marsden went to New Zealand, first and foremost, to preach the gospel because he thought that the Maori was “... wholly under the power and influence of the Prince of Darkness” (Elder 1932:60). On the other hand, however, Marsden held the natives of New Zealand in high regard. He had met some Maori chiefs in Sydney and was invariably impressed with their intelligence and industriousness; he considered them “... the finest and

noblest race of heathens known to the civilised world" (*ibid.* 79). This view also inspired him to introduce the Maori to "... the arts of civilisation and the knowledge of the Christian religion to make them a great nation..." (*ibid.*). In the strategy which Marsden developed for the conversion of the Maori, too, civilisation preceded Christianisation. Marsden was the first who intentionally aimed at assisting Maori people in developing European forms of agriculture. He also encouraged barter of agricultural produce with the increasing number of visitors from Australia.

In this period many Europeans began visiting New Zealand for different purposes. While explorers and beachcombers continued to come to New Zealand simply for trading, after 1814 they were soon outnumbered by European residents inhabiting New Zealand coastal areas for various lengths of time. The first Europeans staying in New Zealand for an indefinite period of time principally aimed at exploring the possibilities of establishing a settler colony. This is clearly reflected in the ethnographic descriptions characteristic of this period.

Although explorers, such as the Frenchman Dumont d'Urville (1950 [1826-7]), continued to add "snapshots" to the ethnographic record during the first half of the nineteenth century, the most important ethnographic sources during this period are from the hand of missionaries and other residents. Marsden himself left behind detailed descriptions of Maori villages, with a focus on agriculture, fishing, trade patterns and other economic activities (cf. Elder 1932), while Nicholas (1817), who accompanied Marsden on his first journey to New Zealand, published detailed descriptions of the Maori population and their economic life in his *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand*.

The report style of both Marsden and Nicholas, including the concentration on Maori economic activities, is characteristic of other records dating from the first period of settlement. Not only later missionaries, such as, for example, Ashwell (1834-69) and Morgan (1833-65), showed a great interest in commercial agriculture and Maori village life at large, but itinerant travellers as well. The army major Cruise (1823), for example, and the surveyor-artist Earle (1909 [1832]), also described aspects of contemporary Maori life.

The initial emphasis on descriptions of New Zealand landscapes and Maori contemporary life is clearly indicative of the ratio behind the ethnographic sources between 1814 and 1840. New Zealand's natural habitat and the place of the Maori people therein were examined in the light of the possibilities for colonial settlement. The wet yet temperate climate as well as the fertility of the soil in New Zealand contrasted

markedly with the extreme aridity of the Australian continent. In consequence, New Zealand was thought to offer excellent natural conditions for the establishment of a British settler colony. In addition, the eagerness of the Maori population for trading and their apparent amenability to European immigration was incomparable with the illusive indifference shown by the Aborigines to the convicts and other colonial settlers in Australia. Conclusions in this respect, however, were not unambiguous as Maori people continued to be haunted by their reputation of being belligerent.

The years between 1810 and 1840 were marked by a tremendous increase in inter-tribal warfare, which illustrates the turmoil in Maori socio-political organisation ensuing from the revolutionary changes in Maori economy. In the early 1820s Maori people acquired muskets in great numbers, and, consequently, inter-tribal wars for such traditional reasons as *utu* ('return' for anything, *casu quo* revenge) got out of control. The wars did not come to an end until, in the north in the 1830s, and in the south in the early 1840s, European arms were equally distributed across all regions.

The results of internecine warfare were dramatic by any standards. Increased loss of life and new diseases caused a drastic population decline. Since traditional methods failed to solve these new problems, more and more people began to believe in the efficacy of the Christian God (Wright 1959:*passim*). As a result, conversion to Christianity took place on a massive scale in the 1830s, not only in areas that were clearly characterised by social dislocation and cultural disruption, but also in regions where the local tribes were prospering in commercial trade (Howe 1973). Christianity seemed, therefore, predominantly associated with the wealth and strength of European culture, and conversion must be situated in the wider context of Maori receptivity for European settlement. The intimate connection between conversion and Maori enthusiasm for literacy illustrates this as well. In the 1830s many Maori people replaced their interest in material goods with a wholesale quest for the knowledge behind European cultural authority. Many decided that only literacy could provide the secrets of the European world (Jackson 1975:31-2).

The impact of the extensive and deliberate use of literacy by Maori people, usually as a result of missionary influence, on New Zealand ethnography has been tremendous. Missionary training of Maori people in reading and writing revolutionised the ethnographic record of New Zealand by introducing the "native text", which would later become important for ethnohistorical research as well as for reconstructions of Maori prehistory (Groube 1985:6). At the same time, Maori enthusiasm for literacy added to their respectable reputation, which, in turn, contributed to an increase in British settlement.

In the 1830s the population of non-missionary settlers began to overtake that of the missionaries. The majority of European settlers was from the colony of New South Wales and intended to exploit the growing market economy in New Zealand, but many also came from England, where Edward Gibbon Wakefield had established the New Zealand Association (later to become Company), which aimed at systematically establishing a colony in New Zealand by purchasing massive amounts of land. His actions prompted the Colonial Office, which in the 1830s formulated official British policy towards New Zealand, to take measures.

THE COLONISATION OF NEW ZEALAND

Although in 1833 the Colonial Office had appointed a British Resident to protect the Europeans and the Maori population from each other, it was clearly reluctant to intervene in the situation it faced on the frontier of the British Empire. It was, however, obliged by statute to control the excesses of the British subjects who had migrated to New Zealand, while in some cases it was also bound to provide support. After all, many British migrants were victims of Wakefield's romantic advertisements that it was possible to make a quick fortune through the rise in the value of the land following colonial settlement, and subsequently return to England (Miller 1958:118-28). At the same time, the British authorities felt morally obliged to protect the Maori people from the potentially disastrous consequences of the anarchic situation created by uncontrolled British settlement (Adams 1977:13). Some form of British intervention was widely regarded as inevitable.

On 29th January 1840 the first Governor of New Zealand, William Hobson, landed at the Bay of Islands. He had been instructed to secure sovereignty for Britain, preferably by means of a treaty with the Maori people. On behalf of Queen Victoria, Governor Hobson invited Maori chiefs to gather at Waitangi, where he presented them with a treaty. It was proposed that the Maori would cede sovereignty to the British Crown in exchange for the "full, exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties". The translation of "sovereignty" in the Maori language, which was a new concept to the Maori anyway, was somewhat ambiguous. It clarifies why eventually about 530 chiefs of various tribes signed the Treaty (Orange 1987:259-60). Referring to the signatories of what became known as the Treaty of Waitangi, Hobson proclaimed British sovereignty over New Zealand on 21st May 1840 (*ibid.* 81).⁷

Although the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi does mark the formal notification of the first steps towards comprehensive European control of New Zealand, it cannot be substantiated that from the proclamation of British sovereignty the Maori have been overrun by colonial settlers. Initially, the

effect of the Treaty was barely noticeable in many parts of New Zealand. Most Maori tribes, in fact, retained a considerable degree of control of the political and the economic situation throughout New Zealand for at least 15 years after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. The best illustration of this view is provided by the expansion of commercial agriculture.

In the 1840s many tribal areas had thriving cultivations and flour mills. Coastal tribes had developed shipping businesses and mediated between the interior tribes and the local markets which they supplied with almost all its produce, while at the same time maintaining a considerable export trade to Australia and other areas in the Pacific. Until the mid-1850s Maori tribes produced the bulk of the food crops supplied on the Auckland market and half of those which were exported overseas (van Meijl 1990:177-85).

At least until the late 1840s the British had a vested interest in Maori enterprises, since they were entirely dependent on their food supply. However, the dependency on the yield of Maori agriculture was not appreciated by all settlers, most of whom had no place reserved for the Maori as competitor in their vision of the new colony. The main problem they faced was a lack of land that could be used productively, and on which labour could be employed.

Initially many Maori people had seemed willing to sell vast tracts of land to European settlers, but whether they had an inkling that European settlers were buying land on the understanding they would acquire permanent title is highly debatable. After the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, however, most Maori tribes soon realised that settlers believed they had obtained the land permanently. As a result, more and more tribes became reluctant to sell land, particularly in the areas which were thriving on trade.

In the mid-1850s the problem of Maori resistance to the sale of land became more acute. Due to a slump in the market the competition between Maori and Europeans shifted from the product of the land to the ownership of the land. Subsequently, after a decade of skirmishing between “land-takers” and “land-holders”, as Maori people phrased it, war finally broke out between Maori and Pakeha in March 1860. The New Zealand Wars lasted until the end of 1864. Immediately after the wars the government confiscated three million acres of Maori land in the most fertile and cultivable areas of the North Island. The motive behind the confiscations was clearly to facilitate European settlement.

CHANGING ETHNOGRAPHIES

The years between 1840 and 1865 must be considered as an intermediate stage in the colonial history of New Zealand. The balance of power gradually shifted to the increasing number of European settlers, who from approxi-

mately the mid-1850s outnumbered the Maori population. In view of their growing numbers European settlers became more and more frustrated with their lack of political and economic control of the colony of New Zealand. The changing attitudes of the European settler community towards the Maori population are reflected in the changing ethnography produced in this period.

In spite of the greater number of Europeans migrating to New Zealand, an increase in the number of ethnographic descriptions did not occur. Instead a shift in emphasis of Maori ethnography became noticeable. After the European population of New Zealand outnumbered the Maori and the society of colonial settlers became more stable, the everyday practices of the Maori were no longer as intriguing and important to the immigrants living in New Zealand as they had been to the first explorers and travellers (Groube 1985:7). In addition, the European settler community became gradually less dependent on Maori food supplies. As a result, descriptions of Maori daily life, agriculture, fishing and other mundane activities are less common after 1840. Thus, too, the revolutionary changes in Maori agriculture and the expansion of associated activities up until the mid-1850s, such as the construction of mills and the purchase of cutters and schooners, have scarcely been documented. Although many ethnographers did refer casually to the impressive record of Maori cash-cropping and shipping trade, no systematic, let alone comprehensive study of Maori economic development has ever been published, even in the twentieth century (van Meijl 1990:177-8). Maori commercial enterprises clearly did not and still do not fit the current and contemporary frameworks of historiography, in which change is ultimately assumed to take place as a result of the introduction of European civilisation only.

At the same time as Europeans became uninterested, literally and metaphorically, in Maori economic life, they began concentrating more on collecting information about religious beliefs, superstitions, traditions and the genealogical accounts of tribal history. To some extent, this shifting focus of ethnography was already motivated by the conviction that the extinction of the Maori in the future was inevitable. Poorly known aspects of Maori culture were to be salvaged before they had been replaced by European civilisation (see below). Furthermore, European ethnographers aimed at appropriating Maori society in its entirety. With the completion of the political and economic subordination of Maori people nearing, only the ideological colonisation of the Maori population was still to be accomplished. The shifting selection of ethnographic data and their methodological processing may clarify this.

The ethnographic data collected during the period post-1840 can be divided into two broad categories. Firstly, the importance of genealogies

in the Maori social system, both as a means of establishing the identity of the individual in the group and as a method of identifying the group and laying claim to land, entailed that they constituted a significant part of the recorded material. Secondly, many types of traditions were collected during this period. Mythological accounts of the origin of the Maori people and the activities of their mythical ancestors such as Maui, were written down for the first time. Historical traditions concerning mainly the deeds of a group's recent, rather than remote, ancestors were recorded. Maori chants (*waiata*), being a source of both mythological and historical traditions, were collected in massive numbers as well (cf. Groube 1985:6-7).

The new type of ethnography was based on new methods of data collection. While detached observation of Maori life involved the main ethnographic method in the past, missionary penetration and practices were now underlying the colonial encounter from which ethnographic data on genealogies, religion and other Maori traditions were collected and constructed. The new methodology involved a more active participation by Maori people themselves, which positions the policy adopted by the missionaries of learning the Maori language and teaching the scriptures in the native language in a different perspective. The development of a bilingual, often literate population of natives was essential for the systematic collection of genealogies and traditions, often in Maori, from "informants". The mission-trained Maori people with their newly acquired and proficient literacy skills could contribute many ethnographic documents necessary to facilitate the completion of colonisation.

The ideological implications of the new ethnography are best illustrated by the way in which the new data collections were processed into ethnographic texts. These were increasingly based on a homogenisation of Maori tribal accounts. In spite of the local context in which Maori traditions had been recorded, the British applied a "unite and rule" recipe, had little regard for tribal variations and represented tribal accounts as belonging to all Maori people. Sir George Grey, for example, acquired as Governor of New Zealand accounts of various myths and beliefs from chiefs throughout the North Island, but he interwove them into a single, pan-tribal account which he published in 1854 as *Ko Nga Mahi A Nga Tupuna*, in 1855 to be translated as *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the Maori as Told by their Priests and Chiefs*.⁸ Grey's publications were soon followed by Shortland's influential book, *Traditions and Superstitions of the New Zealanders*, which was chiefly based on research on the South Island, while in 1855 the missionary Richard Taylor published a book from information collected in the Wanganui district, *Te Ika a Maui*, which was one

of the first syntheses of the so-called traditional culture of the Maori (Groube 1985:3). The link between the detribalisation of Maori traditions in these publications and the colonisation process is most effectively exemplified by the immediate stop to the steady flow of publications after the increase in tension between Maori and Pakeha resulted in the outbreak of hostilities in 1860. After the completion of colonisation by the wars and the subsequent confiscations of land, new strategies were in order to transform European domination into a form a hegemony.

AFTER THE WARS: FROM DESCRIPTION TO RECONSTRUCTION

After the wars the government attempted to consolidate its position on the confiscated lands. Outside the confiscated areas the sale of land was facilitated by the Native Land Court, which was set up in 1865 in order to individualise tribal land titles by allotting individual shares to a maximum number of ten owners of each block of land (Kawharu 1977, Smith 1960). As a result many Maori people lost recognition of their interests and were dispossessed of their tribal lands.⁹

The operation of the Native Land Court had a significant impact on the nature of the ethnographic record after 1865. Land, highly prized by Maori and Europeans alike, albeit for different reasons, became the subject of claims and counterclaims, which were invariably supported by genealogical and traditional evidence. Thus, the Native Land Court facilitated the recording of traditional narratives, but at the same time witnesses' accounts were likely to be influenced by the political purpose of their presentation in court. The public arena of the courts provoked the manipulation of genealogies and the reconstitution of traditions in the light of the politicised ambience eliciting their disclosure in the first place (Groube 1985:4; Reilly 1985:63-4).

Since the legal machinery had no fixed criteria for testing the validity of the genealogical and traditional evidence submitted to the Native Land Court, it remains difficult to assess the extent to which genealogies and traditions were reinterpreted in order to serve Maori land claims. At the same time, however, there can be no doubt that the transcriptions and eventual publications of genealogies and tribal histories recounted in the Native Land Court resulted in a reification and essentialisation of Maori traditions. The accumulating abundance of references to tradition, expert opinions and legal decisions became a crucial corpus of objectified sources for people involved in research into the past state of the Maori people. European ethnographers regarded the mass of Maori traditions recorded in the case files of the Native Land Court as a major contribution to their campaign of salvaging the Maori past for future research (Groube 1985:4).

The reification of Maori tribal histories and traditions ensuing from their recording in the Native Land Court was further compounded by the dislocation of Maori society following the New Zealand Wars. The wars, the subsequent land confiscations as well as the proceedings in the Native Land Court caused famine, widespread epidemics and a fundamental disruption of Maori morale. In consequence, the size of the Maori population was approaching an absolute low, which, in turn, generated the belief that the extinction of the Maori “race” was inevitable. Even European ethnographers and art collectors were in agony about a chance of survival for the Maori population. Towards the end of the nineteenth century it prompted them to make an effort to document and preserve traditional Maori culture and art, in particular those aspects which had been neglected during the early stage of contact. The implementation of their campaign for salvaging Maori traditions, however, disclosed a preoccupation with the exotic aspects of Maori culture and to some extent even only with Maori “high culture”. This narrow view of “culture” would have far-reaching influences on later conceptions of Maori culture and history.

Art traditions were reified in a rather orthodox doctrine formulated by two European art collectors: C.E. Nelson, the manager of a tourist hotel in Rotorua, and Augustus Hamilton, the director of the Colonial Museum in Wellington. In order to salvage traditional Maori art, Nelson and Hamilton employed a number of Maori carvers to build and ornament ancestral Maori meeting-houses for display and tourist use. Their commissions were rather detailed, including particular instructions regarding certain motifs. If these did not concur with their image of traditional Maori art they did not hesitate to correct the carvers. Thus, figures with heeled boots as introduced after contact were removed as inauthentic, and recarved with the supposedly more genuine feet and toes (Neich 1983:257-9). Characters celebrated in super-tribal mythology were substituted for tribal ancestors in order to make it easier for tourists to understand (*ibid.* 259). Nelson and Hamilton clearly held strong views about what constituted authentic forms of traditional Maori culture, and as patrons of the Maori carvers they specifically requested them to carve in what was supposed to be the most traditional style. Nelson even liked to be referred to as the “white *tohunga* (‘expert’)”. One journalist characterised him as “more Maori than the Maori” (quoted in Neich 1983:255).¹⁰

The rigorous reification of traditional Maori art in its reconstruction by Nelson and Hamilton was paralleled in the field of ethnography, best illustrated by the ethnographic expedition into the Ureweras on the North Island by Elsdon Best. In 1890 Best went to live in the interior East Coast area

where the Tuhoe Maori, who had been relatively isolated from European influences for over a hundred years, were one of the last groups on the North Island to have direct European contact. The rugged tribal territory of Tuhoe was finally opened up for the expansion of European society with the beginning of the construction of roads in 1892. At that moment Best was encouraged to retreat among the Tuhoe Maori by Percy Smith, a Surveyor General and Commissioner of Crown Land, co-founder of The Polynesian Society and editor of its journal, who believed that before long this was the only area where traditional, i.e. pre-European, Maori customs could still be recorded (Craig 1964:54-5, *passim*).

Best left the Ureweras after 15 years, when so many of his elderly informants had died and when in his view Tuhoe Maori, too, were so swiftly becoming Europeanised that it had become impossible to collect the information he required for his ethnographic mission. Subsequently, he took up the position of Ethnologist in the Dominion Museum and reworked the bulk of his abundant notes into an extraordinary number of publications. Most of Best's publications are centred around his effort to describe, as one of his books was titled, *The Maori As He Was* (1924) before Europeans changed the Maori way of life. Unlike earlier ethnographic reports on Maori society simply aiming at describing contemporary Maori life and customs, Best attempted to reconstruct pre-European Maori society (Groube 1985:27). Since many influential scholars in Maori culture and history, including the members of the Young Maori Party, later leaned heavily upon Best's publications, it is necessary to assess the value of his research.¹¹

The merits of Best's publications must be examined in the light of two important facts. Firstly, the Urewera area in which Best conducted his research was fairly atypical to the extent that the Tuhoe Maori did not practise agriculture or fishing. Since the Maori economy in other areas of New Zealand was predominantly based on fishing and farming, it is ironic that through Best's efforts most data on nineteenth century Maori society were collected in an area where neither could be pursued. An important means of assessing Best's *oeuvre* is by a detailed comparison with earlier accounts, but all of these are of coastal people making a comparative study rather problematic (Groube 1985:30-1).

In the second place, it is important to realise that Best conducted his fieldwork in the Ureweras relatively late. There can be little doubt that over a period of 120 years of colonial contact tremendous changes had occurred in Maori society. Although the Urewera country was outside the main areas of direct European influence, the *indirect* influence must have been nearly as great as in other areas such as the Waikato and Taranaki, where direct European contact occurred relatively late, i.e. post 1820, but which at that

stage had already been affected in every aspect by European settlement in Northland (cf. Howe 1973). Consequently, it needs to be taken into account that much information which Best presented as applying to the prehistoric period was obtained from informants rather than from direct observation (cf. Groube 1985:30).

Related to the rather naive belief in the temporal and spatial isolation of the Tuhoe Maori is the basic assumption in Best's publications that traditional Maori society had remained unchanged since the time of discovery and settlement of New Zealand by the Maori, approximately between the fifth and tenth century. This presupposition was consistent with the main premise of Nelson's and Hamilton's campaign of reconstructing traditional Maori art and their quest for the authentic. The similarity in assumptions by Best, Nelson and Hamilton indicates that towards the end of the nineteenth century an ethnographic discourse on "traditional" Maori society emerged in which Maori traditions were reified. In this discourse it was postulated that change in Maori society had only been triggered off by contact with European explorers and later settlers. Along similar lines the contemporary belief in the imminent and seemingly inevitable extinction of the Maori population was validated by Social Darwinism and its innovative dogmas of "survival of the fittest" and "natural selection" following the introduction of European civilisation. The dynamics of traditional Maori society were supposed to be chiefly external rather than internal. As a corollary, reconstructions of traditional Maori society in so-called authentic form were presented as rather static.

Interestingly, now, the ethnographic discourse emerging towards the end of the nineteenth century had also a great impact on the detemporalisation of traditional Maori culture and society in the concept of Maoritanga as it was first formulated by the members of the Young Maori Party. For that reason, it is necessary to examine the relationship between, on the one hand, the reification of traditional Maori art, culture and society in the discourse initiated by Nelson, Hamilton, Best and their associates, and, on the other hand, Maori conceptions of their past as they have developed from the beginning of the present century.

THE IMPACT OF ETIC MODELS ON EMIC VIEWS OF MAORI TRADITION

The argument that the oral tradition of the New Zealand Maori has been influenced by European reconstructions of their history is nowadays barely revelatory. Recent reconstructions of the historical process of resolving the enigma of the whence and whither of the Maori, which European settlers speculated about ever since they arrived in New Zealand, have made

abundantly clear that several nineteenth century European myths about the origin of the Maori people have been incorporated into Maori oral traditions (Sorrenson 1979; Hanson 1989).¹² Thus, when in their ceremonial speeches (*whaikōrero*) Maori elders pay respect to their ancestors in “Hawaiki-nui, Hawaiki-roa, Hawaiki-pā-mamao” (Great Hawaiki, Long Hawaiki, Distant Hawaiki), or when they attribute the discovery and settlement of New Zealand to Kupe, Toi and later the Great Fleet, they, in fact, echo the legendary voice of Percy Smith (1898-1899; 1904; 1910). The impact of etic interpretations and reifications of Maori traditions on emic models of the past has, however, not been restricted to the theory of the whence and whither of the Maori. Emic conceptions of Maori history and traditions have in a much wider sense been deeply affected by etic models of Maori traditions, among other things, in the field of art as well as in the pan-tribal discourse on Maoritanga as initiated by the Young Maori Party.

The ancestral meeting-houses which were built under the guidance of Nelson and Hamilton, for example, and particularly their accompanying carvings, displayed some innovative features that have since become canonised as characteristic of the most authentic style of traditional Maori art. In spite of the presumption to be portraying Maori culture in its most traditional and authentic form, the orthodox doctrine developed by European art patrons who were committed to the preservation of a putatively pre-European form of Maori art, entailed a new style of carving in which, for example, the link between form and content was decidedly disconnected for the first time in history. In addition, aspective representation was gradually substituted by perspective representation, and, finally, artists became more self-conscious in respect of the transformation of their vision of the world in an art-object world (Neich 1983:260). In the course of time, now, these innovative features of carving have become prototypical for traditional Maori art. Contemporary forms of traditional Maori art and other crafts have been profoundly influenced by European conceptualisations of traditional Maori culture in supposedly authentic form as developed around the turn of the century.

Parallelling modern developments in traditional art, contemporary Maori conceptions of the past have also been influenced by nineteenth century reifications of Maori traditions. Initially the influence of the ethnographic discourse inaugurated by Elsdon Best was most apparent in the work of European scholars, but soon it became clear that Best's authority as an ethnographer of Maori traditions reached far beyond the boundaries of academic discourse. While Nelson's personal desire to be regarded as a “white *tohunga*” in some sense concealed the inventive character of his salvaging enterprise, Maori expert elders themselves considered Best a European

tohunga of Maori traditions. They spontaneously embraced and authorised Best's ethnographic knowledge, as shown, among other things, in an account quoted by Pitt-Rivers (1927:220), who in the early 1920s travelled with Best to his former research area in the Ureweras:

...although a Pakeha, Te Peehi (Elsdon Best) is the survivor of the bygone Maori elders..., because his knowledge of old-time lore, even going back to the islands from which our ancestors came, is superior to the present Maori generation.

The acknowledgement of Best's ethnographic authority by his own informants is symbolic for the influence of his work across New Zealand. In due course Maori scholars, such as the members of the Young Maori Party, also grounded their discourse on Maori culture and tradition almost entirely in Best's ethnographies. Interestingly, however, this entailed that, at least to a large extent, people such as Apirana Ngata and Peter Buck phrased their accounts of Maori traditions in terms of the same presuppositions that were characteristic of Best's perspective on history and tradition. The epistemological impact of Best on Maori constructions of their past is most evident in the Young Maori Party's portrayal of Maori customs and traditions as timeless. The members of the Young Maori Party were inclined to overlook the historical circumstances in which Best had recorded his ethnographic reports, and, as a result, bypassed the fact that Maori society and culture had been substantially transformed after the initial expansion of colonial contacts. Following Best, they tended therefore to disregard the dynamics of Maori society.

In spite of the striking parallels between Best's portrayal of the Maori past on the one hand, and that of the Young Maori Party on the other, there can be no doubt that the latter was driven by a different motivation from the European authors of the ethnographic discourse around the turn of the century. While Nelson, Hamilton, Best and other European scholars of the Maori past assumed the superiority of modern civilisation and, accordingly, regarded the evaporation of Maori traditions in the future as inevitable, Ngata, Buck and associates had an interest in counterbalancing the increasing influence of European society. Accordingly, they aimed at showing the continuing relevance of Maori traditions still sustaining a distinct cultural identity within the context of European society (Sorrenson 1982:17). Thus, whereas European scholars of the Maori past were aspiring to salvage Maori traditions for the future on grounds of their conviction that they would soon be replaced by European modernity, Maori scholars of Maori traditions transformed the European ethnographic collections of their historic society

into timeless treasures to show that the relics of the distant Maori past were eternally essential for Maori identities in past, present and future.

The difference in motivation to represent traditional Maori society as static and unchangeable had, of course, political implications. While Europeans were nearing the completion of the colonisation process by ideologically appropriating what they considered the final rudiments of classic Maori society, Maori scholars of tradition were, instead, attempting to counter the imminent threat of European dominance being transformed into a form of hegemony. The influence of European representations of Maori traditions on the counter-colonial campaign of the Young Maori Party, however, indicated a global acceptance of the structures of power and subordination (cf. Guha 1983a and b). The construction of Maoritanga in terms of the same, static parameters on which the contemporary European discourse on the Maori past was based pointed not only to the location and source of colonial power, but suggested also that European discourse was unavoidable for Maori people wishing to reconstruct their relation to the settler community of New Zealand. Like other colonised peoples experiencing an identity crisis, the leaders of the Young Maori Party could only aspire to achieve "self-awareness via a series of negations, via their consciousness of the identity... of their enemy" (Gramsci 1971:273). The ideological differences between European and Maori portrayals of Maori traditions as static, disappearing in one view and detemporalised in another, might be further clarified in the context of socio-political developments at the beginning of this century.

YOUNG MAORI PARTY AND THE DISCOURSE OF TRADITION

In the beginning of the twentieth century a new era began in Maori political history. It was increasingly recognised that the social welfare of the Maori population could only be improved by obtaining equal rights within European society. For that reason, too, the struggle for Maori sovereignty was temporarily suspended, although it simultaneously caused great anxiety about the cultural identity of Maori people. Recognition of European power was not supposed to entail a complete assimilation into New Zealand society at the expense of a distinct Maori way of life. Thus Maori political ideology came to serve the two different objectives of "inclusion" into European society and "biculturalism" (Schwimmer 1968).

Inclusion was advocated, first and foremost, as a plea for socio-economic equality and involved a demand for equal rights. However, within the boundaries of the society in which Maori and Europeans were to hold an equivalent status, Maori people also aspired to retain a distinctive culture and identity. Hence they simultaneously pleaded the right to be excluded from

some dimensions of New Zealand society in order to maintain their own norms and customs. The latter aim has become known as the policy of biculturalism.

The dual policy of inclusion and biculturalism was initially most effectively advocated by the members of the Young Maori Party. Although some members of this organisation took up parliamentary seats, it never actually formed a political party. Instead it was made up of a group of educated individuals who operated politically (Fitzgerald 1977:32). The most influential members of the group, such as Apirana Turupa Ngata, Peter Buck, Maui Pomare, Tutere Wi Repa, Reweti Kohere and Edward Pohura Ellison, were all from the Te Aute College Students' Association, an Anglican Boys' College in Hawke's Bay, but in due course it also drew in young Maori men from other schools, such as Frederick Bennett, who was later consecrated as the first Bishop of Aotearoa.

The first campaign of the revolutionary reformers who would later set up the Young Maori Party, was conducted in 1887 when three students from the Te Aute College, Maui Pomare, Reweti Kohere and Timutimu Tawhai, visited a number of Maori villages in Hawke's Bay during their summer holiday. They advocated the need for sanitation and sobriety, which advice was obviously not received with enthusiasm. Most Maori people, the elderly in particular, took exception to the students preaching "a Pakeha lesson", this even apart from the fact that young students were not allowed to speak on *marae*, the Maori ceremonial centres (Sigley 1974:23-4).

In spite of the failure of the first educational tour by the three Te Aute College students, in 1891 approximately 20 students from the same college established the "Association for the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Maori Race". This Association aimed at the "elevation of Maori social life" by organising welfare campaigns in which the focus was on "the suppression of the drink traffic amongst the Maoris, the abolition of injurious customs and useless meetings, [and] the dissemination and application of sanitary knowledge" (Te Aute College Students' Association 1897:4). Again, the reform plans of the diligent and ambitious students met with significant suspicion in the Maori communities in which they were presented. And again particularly the communities' elders taken aback by the young students' mission. The students, however, did not give up easily. They were convinced of the significance of their plans for "the welfare of the Maori race as a whole" and blamed the failure of their first campaigns on the "deep-rooted conservatism of the Maori character" (*ibid.* 5). Hence they decided to persist and reconvened in 1897.

Five years later, then, the "Te Aute College Students' Association" was set up at an inaugural conference held at the College in early February. This

conference set the pattern for the annual conferences that were to follow during the next decade and laid down the main guidelines for future action. It was agreed to try to “induce a widespread dissatisfaction with existing modes of life and conduct, in order that the way be opened up for the introduction of a better state of things” (Te Aute College Students’ Association 1898:7). The “existing modes of life and conduct” were specified particularly with regard to “Maori meetings of every kind”, which were considered “productive of vice”:

When a meeting disperses one always expects to hear of elopements; and one is seldom disappointed. Maori virtue is such a cheap commodity that it is bartered for a kiss, a cigarette, an ardent look, a smile. The Maori is constitutionally weak. His antecedents are not healthy. Vice has found its way into his blood, and become an hereditary taint. Each succeeding generation but adds to the burden its children have to carry (Te Aute College Students’ Association 1897:17).

In order to “elevate” Maori moral standards and bring them into line with European morality, the main subject discussed at the first two conferences of the Association concerned the “discouragement and abolition of objectionable and pernicious customs in connection with Maori meetings of all kinds”, including long funeral wakes (*tangihanga*; Te Aute College Students’ Association 1897:10). Maori conduct at the ceremonial gatherings was not only associated with so-called Maori vices, but the meetings were also held responsible for the spread of epidemics. Maori people were accordingly encouraged to adopt better hygiene practices,¹³ while the members of the Te Aute College Students’ Association also lobbied for the suppression of the medical practices of Maori religious specialists (*tohunga*), which countered the introduction of western medicine.¹⁴

If Maori people would forgo their “antiquated” customs and abstain from their “degraded” forms of moral conduct, a prosperous future would, it was believed, eventuate. In the view of the Te Aute College Students’ Association, however, the new future simply involved complete integration into the economic and political frameworks of European society. The motto of the Maori students was unequivocally expressed by Maui Pomare, who said: *Kua kotia te tai-tapu ki Hawaiki*, “There is no returning to Hawaiki [the mythological homeland of the Maori, TvM]” (Fitzgerald 1977:34); in his opinion there was “... no alternative but to become a pakeha” (quoted in King 1981:289). In accordance with this viewpoint the members of the Association campaigned for the Maori people to pursue education and to embrace European technology in order to develop the land still held in Maori ownership (e.g. Ngata 1898b,

Poutawera 1897, Thorpe 1898). A Protestant work ethic and a more individualist attitude towards life were on the agenda as indispensable means for achieving European levels of wealth and prosperity (cf. Prentice 1897, 1899).

The campaigns of the Young Maori Party were at a peak when the Parliament passed a number of liberal acts granting limited self-government to the Maori in the beginning of this century. In addition, members of the students' association successfully appealed to the Natives Land Court Act of 1894 which created the possibility of overcoming the fragmentation and multiplicity of ownership in blocks of Maori freehold land by setting up incorporations that could develop unused land. At the same time the Maori population started growing again until in 1921 it regained the level of the 1850s, while its growth rate exceeded the increase of the European population in 1928 (Pool 1991). Hence the beginning of the century has been thought of as the dawn of a Maori renaissance, which has usually been attributed to the campaigns by the Te Aute College Students' Association (e.g. Sorrenson 1990). In 1909 the students' association was officially reconstituted as the Young Maori Party. However, this standard view of New Zealand history may be queried for a number of reasons.

In the first place, it must be realised that the impact of the land reforms was extremely limited. Until the 1930s the incorporations were few and far between among tribes other than Apirana Ngata's own tribe, Ngati Porou, while in 1960 most incorporations that had been formed were inactive because of a lack of funds (Sorrenson 1973:2312). In addition, there are good grounds for believing that the impact of the Young Maori Party on Maori social welfare has been somewhat exaggerated too. From the outset it was obvious that "no Maori reformer [had] arisen... to work a series of social miracles" and that Maori people generally were reluctant to make "a bonfire of all its objectionable customs in obedience to the dictates of the Association" (Te Aute College Students' Association 1898:7). After its first six years of campaigning it was again concluded that particularly older Maori people "were apt to resent" or even "take offence at... some of the opinions and proposals put forth by their juniors" (Te Aute College Students' Association 1902:8-9). At that stage there was already some anxiety that the work of the Association would "create differences between the old generation and the new" (*ibid.* 9).

The reports of the annual conferences of the Students' Association do not conceal that many people were suspicious of the students' intentions because they simply seemed to aim at bringing Maori social practices into a degree of conformity with European values. The concern about the

effect of the Young Maori Party's campaigns for the improvement of Maori welfare must be seen in the light of its policy to enforce European, middle-class conventions of respectability, and these were evidently associated with their education. The political programme of the Young Maori Party was therefore widely contested. During the students' tours many elders who had wished their children to be educated to enable them to compete with their European peers on equal terms, expressed grief that the boys at Te Aute College became lost for the Maori cause:

We sent you to the Colleges to learn the wisdom of the pakeha, not for your own benefit, but for the good of your people (quoted in Te Aute College Students' Association 1898:19).

As a result, tribes became rather judicious about the selection of boys to be sent to college, in order to ensure they would, rather than simply introducing European mores, apply their knowledge and skills to the benefit of the Maori people at large. Apirana Ngata is an example of a student who was sent to college after he had been elected by the elders of his tribe (Ramsden 1948:26-8). And, indeed, he became the student who seemed least influenced by the education he received at Te Aute. While firm to his tribal background, he was arguably also the first Maori leader who showed statesmanlike qualities in European terms. He never failed to promote the welfare of "the Maori race" (Ngata 1898a), but he also expressed concern about the impact of the students' education:

Never let us be false to our people. Whatever education may do for us, let it not put us out of touch with them, else our training will be a pitiful and lamentable failure (quoted in Te Aute College Students' Association 1897:12).

In spite of his caution about a possible rift between an educated elite and an uneducated mass, Ngata was strongly convinced that Maori people could only reach the same level of economic wealth as Europeans by attaining the same standards of education. At the same time, Ngata realised that aiming at an education of equal merit was in itself highly ambivalent since it perforce involved the loss of cultural identity. Ngata recognised the potential contradictions between a European education and a Maori identity, but he clearly aimed to transcend these by rendering them metaphorically as each other's complements, among other things, in a famous poem (see van Meijl 1990:214).

Although Ngata's vision of the future of New Zealand was an idealistic portrayal of the blending of Maori and Pakeha with each society retaining its own culture, he seemed to be aware he was essentially fighting a rearguard action. His positive attitude towards education was

mixed with ambivalence about the effects which the tension between Maori and European values generated. In order to offset the negative impact a European education could have on a Maori identity, Ngata revalorised Maori tradition and adopted a glorifying attitude in respect of a Maori identity in terms of Maori traditions. He promoted a sense of pride in being Maori, and a detribalised, proto-cultural conception of Maori culture was constructed to support that view (Ngata 1948). This view of Maori culture became known under the concept of *Maoritanga*.

The term Maoritanga is attributed to James Carroll, who in 1920 urged the following expression upon a Maori audience:

Kia mau ki tō koutou Māoritanga.

Hold fast to your Maorihood (quoted in Ngata 1940:176).

Initially Europeans interpreted the term as a call for separatism, but it was meant to be applied in a context of biculturalism. Ngata (*ibid.* 176-7) defined the term as follows:

... an emphasis on the continuing individuality of the Maori people, the maintenance of such Maori characteristics and such features of Maori culture as present day circumstances will permit, the inculcation of pride in Maori history and traditions, the retention so far as possible of old-time ceremonial, the continuous attempt to interpret the Maori point of view to the *pakeha* in power.

Ngata elaborated his view of “Maori culture” on which this definition of Maoritanga was based, in an address delivered to the Polynesian Society in 1947 (Ngata 1948). In this lecture he defined culture broadly as “the things that people do with their hands and conceive with their minds”, as the combination of “the whole gamut of material things” on the one hand, and “a man’s thinking and intellect and spirit” on the other (*ibid.* 94). However, in his selection of “*Some Aspects of Maori Culture*” (emphasis added), as his speech was entitled, he was ambivalent about the value of such a broad conception of Maori culture within contemporary New Zealand society. Ngata focussed his exposition of Maori culture clearly on the traditional, largely “material” dimension of culture, including tribal histories and, above all, the expressive aspects of culture, such as food, language, poetry, arts and crafts. At the same time, he excluded the non-material dimension of culture, such as the moral conduct of Maori people which he and his colleagues had rejected during the campaigns of the Te Aute College Students’ Association. Thus, Ngata implicitly distinguished between Maori culture as a living reality, which he did not

take on board in his cultural project, and Maori culture as “a dead exhibit in a museum” which he aimed at reviving “as a living force in the community” (*ibid.* 85). The latter concerned particularly those aspects of Maori culture that were no longer functional in everyday life, such as the arts and crafts. Following the deterioration of Maori living standards these had become increasingly marginal in peoples’ daily lives, and for that reason they had to be revived and safeguarded for the future. A revival of the expressive aspects of Maori culture could in Ngata’s view also maximise the “stimulation of pride” in their “culture” among Maori people, which he described as the “keynote” of his address (*ibid.* 101).

Ngata’s reduction of culture to its expressive aspects, in spite of his broad theoretical definition, is important because it still prevails in contemporary discourse. The outstanding leader of the Young Maori Party laid the foundation for the current exoticisation, if not folklorisation, of Maori arts and crafts and other selected aspects of the Maori past. It should be realised, however, that Ngata’s construction of Maori culture, of Maoritanga, was inevitably inspired by late nineteenth century European representations of the Maori, by the work of Nelson and Hamilton, who commenced subsidising Maori carvers to restore and decorate “authentic” meeting-houses, and particularly by the ethnographic expedition by Best and his campaign to salvage the so-called rudiments of “traditional Maori culture”.

Ngata and companions continued the genre of cultural documentation along the same track as the European sponsors of nineteenth century Maori traditions. Ngata was behind the establishment of a Maori School of Arts and Crafts at Rotorua and he encouraged the construction of carved meeting-houses and memorial churches. For some time he was also the president of the Polynesian Society, and the chairman of the Maori Purposes Fund Board and the Board of Maori Ethnological Research, in which roles he encouraged research and publication. He himself published a wide range of songs and poetry (Ngata 1959 [1928]; Ngata & Jones 1961, 1970).¹⁵ His colleague Maui Pomare began collecting Maori myths and legends, which were edited and published in cooperation with James Cowan,¹⁶ while his friend Peter Buck became an associate and later director of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum at Honolulu, where he embarked on a systematic survey of the material culture of the Polynesian islands (e.g. Buck 1949).

The entire enterprise of culture collection involved not only an imitation of the reduction of culture to its expressive, folkloristic aspects in European discourse, but it also copied the reification of Maori traditions in European representations of the Maori past. Contrary to the European collectors of Maori culture who assumed that Maori traditions were evaporating because

they could not be retained in a changed form, the Maori collectors of “culture” believed that their traditions and culture were beyond time. In Maori discourse the objectified traditions were, therefore, reconstituted in a timeless mode. They were merged with indigenous conceptualisations of traditions as eternally significant. In the campaigns of the Young Maori Party the representation of tradition as timeless came to serve a different purpose from the mythic past, namely the political aim of defying the discontinuities in Maori society. The concept of Maoritanga was conceptualised as consisting of timeless treasures in order to counter European domination and to justify and validate the aspiration to biculturalism.

Paradoxically, however, the detemporalisation of tradition in the discourse on Maoritanga might also have contributed to the further development of the colonisation process. After all, the traditions that were rendered timeless for political reasons had in the course of the nineteenth century become increasingly latent in most peoples’ lives. The social situation of Maori people at large had changed so fundamentally that many had become alienated from the forms of culture and tradition that were re-emphasised in the construction of Maoritanga by the Young Maori Party. Arts and crafts, song and dance, myths and legends, the manufacturing of material culture, and even the organisation of ceremonial gatherings had all been eclipsed by the increasing difficulty of sustaining a living in the European dominated society. They were recreated by the leaders of the Young Maori Party as in their view they had the potential to offer Maori people the possibility of expressing their distinct cultural identity within the New Zealand nation-state and of regaining a sense of pride in their separate “culture”. But since in the course of colonial history they had become “dead exhibits in museums”, as Ngata himself phrased it, it cannot be surprising that many Maori people associated the items of Maoritanga that were reconstituted by the Young Maori Party with the programme of the new, educated elite which had access to the museums, so to speak. The emergence of Maoritanga thus created a new division within Maori society, in spite of its aim to unite the Maori population in the face of colonialism’s progress.

Nowadays Apirana Turupa Ngata and other members of the Young Maori Party are often remembered as the ones who reintroduced Maori respect for traditional “culture” (in the restricted sense of the term), whereas around the turn of the century Ngata and companions were despised for their attempts to speed up the Europeanisation of Maori people. They obtained recognition only later when the Maori population started growing again and when they managed to introduce some political reforms through Parliament, particularly land reforms. They can, however, not be given all credit for the turnabout in population figures that occurred during the same period as they

conducted their campaigns for the “amelioration of the conditions of the Maori race”, while the impact of their land reforms was rather limited and might have been somewhat exaggerated by New Zealand historians. In many tribal areas in New Zealand, Ngata is remembered as a leader, not of all Maori people, but only of his own tribe, Ngati Porou. His land development schemes never really got off the ground in areas outside his own tribe. His cultural schemes did succeed elsewhere, but only for a particular category of people, the ones who could indeed feel proud to express their identity in traditional terms. They did not for the majority of Maori people who were forced to move to urban environments, where currently 80% of the Maori population is residing, because traditional culture did not offer them the necessities of life. Their identity was and still is primarily shaped by a disadvantaged position in New Zealand society rather than by traditional culture. The enhanced emphasis on traditional culture as introduced by Ngata and others has only reinforced their sense of alienation from their cultural roots, at least as they have been (re-)defined by the Young Maori Party.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since the beginning of this century the main model for a Maori identity in bicultural circumstances has been rooted in a conception of tradition which, although deeply influenced by nineteenth century European reifications of Maori traditions, was reconstituted in opposition to the rising influence of European society. Over the past three decades this model has been revived in revised form as it now includes moral conduct again, which was specifically excluded by its designers, the members of the Young Maori Party. Nowadays Maoritanga is, however, promoted not only in its original, restricted sense of “high culture”, but also to distinguish Maori culture broadly as spiritual from European culture, which is stereotypically characterised as materialistic. Thus, the oppositional nature of the concept of Maoritanga is reinforced while the paradox of the etic influences on its construction and implications is overshadowed.

The paradox underlying the construction of the concept of Maoritanga is, however, most effectively illustrated by the division it has entailed within Maori society. From the outset the implications of the Young Maori Party’s aspirations to inclusion and biculturalism seemed quite problematic to the less Europeanised mass of Maori people. The policy of biculturalism in particular was widely contested by those who did not have the means, let alone the morale, to be concerned with the cultivation of a traditional identity. As a result, the Young Maori Party’s programme generated a basic division within Maori society between a relatively small educated elite and a predominantly illiterate mass of poor people.

The educated elite was more conscious of their distinctive identity as Maori because of their integrated status. As a result of that status they also had the financial means to sustain and therefore to appreciate their cultural identity as Maori. The concern with cultural identity was, however, less marked among the majority of Maori people, who in Biblical terms were often referred to as the *mōrehu* or 'remnants'.¹⁷ Most Maori men sustained a living as unskilled labourers; they and their families lived in wretched poverty on the fringes of European society, both physically and spiritually. After they had been separated from their land they had few options but to adopt European practices and sell their labour in order to survive. Their prime concern with "bread and butter" made it difficult for them to applaud the innovative reification of "Maoritanga". For the "remnants" the differentiation between inclusion and biculturalism created a new dilemma, rather than resolving the apparent contradiction between Maori and European values. Particularly during the economic recession in the 1930s, many Maori people felt they could either escape from the expectations of being a Maori and move to the city in search of "the Big Three... work, money and pleasure" (Metge 1964:128), or live according to the objectified model of Maori tradition and remain poor.

Over the years the elite model of Maori culture based on a reified notion of tradition has, nevertheless, become formalised in Maori inter-ethnic discourse. In opposition to stereotypical views of European society, Maori tradition continues to be revalorised in order to offset western influences ensuing from the predominance of European practices. At the same time, however, the identity of the mass of Maori people remains largely characterised by poverty and a low status in New Zealand society. Their identity as Maori only marginally reflects the unequivocal valorisation of the past enunciated by a Maori cultural aristo-cracy, but is primarily shaped in a negative manner by their low status in European society. Nonetheless, the political significance of the traditional orientation of the "official" model for a twentieth century Maori identity has made it exceedingly difficult to contest openly the current prevalence of reified conceptions of Maori culture and tradition in inter-ethnic discourse. After more than 150 years of colonisation the weak have no other weapons left but the concept of Maoritanga to reinforce their claim on a distinct identity and an autonomous socio-political status in the "bicultural" nation-state of New Zealand. The reduction of Maori culture to its expressive aspects and the reification of Maori traditions, which was inaugurated by nineteenth century European ethnographers and later adopted by the Young Maori Party, has gradually become omnipresent. At the same time, however, it has alienated many Maori people who can

barely identify in terms of the tradition-oriented model for a Maori identity, since their identity is chiefly shaped by their position in the gutter of European society. Thus, in spite of its main aim of countering European dominance, the construction of the concept of Maoritanga has contributed to the further completion of the colonisation of the Maori people.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this article was presented to the workshop "Colonial Ethnographies" held at the Amsterdam School for Social Research in June 1993. I thank the convenors of the workshop, Oskar Salemink and Peter Pels, as well as the discussant of my contribution, Achille Mbembe, for their constructive comments. I am also grateful to an anonymous reviewer for urging me to elaborate my argument on the Young Maori Party, and to Jan Pouwer for his encouragement. All errors are, of course, my own.
2. The phrase *taha Māori* has become popular since the introduction of Te Taha Maori in the Education Curriculum in 1987. Prior to that year expressions like *te ngākau Māori* ('the Maori heart') or *te wairua Māori* ('the Maori spirit') were more common (cf. Metge 1976:48).
3. In this article the concepts "emic" and "etic" are used only to draw attention to the different epistemological status of the worldview of "insiders" versus the worldview of "outsiders" in cross-cultural analysis. It is by no means intended to evoke associations with other conceptual pairs, e.g. "subjective" versus "objective", that are frequently used in analogy with the basic definitions of "emic" and "etic". For a more elaborate discussion of the terms, see Headland, Pike & Harris (1990).
4. In Maori mytho-praxis the past, the present and the future were collapsed into a form a timelessness in order to allow for the interpretation of events as the repetition of some mythological episode (Johansen 1954:151; see also van Meijl 1990:160-1).
5. For a more extensive analysis of the evolution of Maori socio-political organisation during the initial stage of colonial contact in the early nineteenth century, see van Meijl (1995).
6. For a comparative study of the New Zealand Maori people and the Australian Aborigines, see Howe (1977a).
7. For a comprehensive historical account of the Treaty of Waitangi, see Orange (1987). The essays in Kawharu (1989) offer a scholarly insight into contemporary issues regarding the Treaty of Waitangi.
8. Cf. Simmons (1966:185).
9. The ones who objected to the proceedings of the Court were even further off, since they often had to sell their land in order to pay legal expenses and ended up empty handed (Sorrenson 1956; see also Sinclair 1991:26-38).
10. See also Neich (1993), for an admirable analysis of the history of Maori figurative painting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
11. Few scholars have evaluated Best's ethnography and ethnohistory of the Maori,

and his influence on ethnographic and ethnohistorical research in New Zealand. Craig (1964) published a biography of Elsdon Best, while Sissons critically reflected on Best's ethnography of the Tuhoe in his book *Te Waimana, the Spring of Mana* (1991), but unfortunately I became aware of his book too late to incorporate his views in this article. For the preliminary remarks that follow, I got inspiration from Leslie Groube's reflections in an unpublished syllabus (Groube 1985:30-1).

12. The argument made in this article parallels, to some extent, Hanson's (1989) argument in *The Making of the Maori*. The latter, however, was more concerned with the contemporary revival of culture, while in this paper it is attempted to situate the discourse of "Maoritanga" within a historical perspective on the emergence of the concept around the turn of the century. The historical analysis is important because it explains the oppositional and ambiguous nature of Maoritanga.
13. For the significance of hygiene in colonial discourse, see Fabian (1990) and Thomas (1990).
14. Further information on these issues is contained in the papers by Buck (1899), Ngata (1897a and b) and Prentice (1898), which were presented at the annual conferences organised by the Te Aute College Students' Association.
15. Ngata's project of collecting songs and poetry was completed posthumously by Pei te Hurinui Jones.
16. Cowan produced two volumes under the same title, but a different authorship. In 1930 Volume I of the *Legends of the Maori* was published under his own name, whereas in 1934 Volume II of the *Legends* was put out under the name of Pomare.
17. Cf. Binney & Chaplin (1986).

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